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LESLIE'S
SHORT AND EASY METHOD

WITH THE DEISTS;

WHEREIN THE CERTAINTY OF THE
CHRISTIAN RELIGION
IS ESTABLISHED

RY FOUR INFALLIABLE MARKS.
IN A LETTER TO A FRIEND.

.....

TO WHICH ARE SUBJOINED
FOUR ADDITIONAL MARKS FROM

The same Author's subsequent Tract,

ENTITLED,

THE TRUTH OF CHRISTIANITY
DEMONSTRATED.

.....

COMPRESSED BY

FRANCIS WRANGHAM, M. A.

.....

Let all the nations be gathered together; and all the people be assembled: Who among them can declare this, and show us former things? let them bring forth their witnesses, that they may be justified; or let them hear, and say, "It is truth." ISA. XLIV. 9.

*Crede quod est, quod vis, ac desine tuta vereri:
Deque fide certa sit tibi certa fides.*

OVID.

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MONTREAL:
PRINTED BY SAMUEL MOWER.
1828.

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SHORT AND EASY METHOD

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THE TRUTH OF CHRISTIANITY

FRANCIS W. B. B. B.

THE TRUTH OF CHRISTIANITY

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TO
THE RIGHT HONOURABLE
LORD FREDERIC MONTAGU,
REPRESENTATIVE IN PARLIAMENT
FOR THE COUNTY OF
HUNTINGDON :

IN ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF THE HAPPINESS
DERIVED FROM THE SUPERINTENDENCE
OF HIS SUCCESSFUL STUDIES ;
IN GRATITUDE FOR THE HONOUR,
IMPLIED IN HIS CONTINUAL FRIENDSHIP ;

AND
IN TESTIMONY OF THE ANXIETY
FELT FOR HIS WELFARE,
TEMPORAL AND ETERNAL ;
THIS VOLUME IS INSCRIBED,
WITH THE DEEPEST REGARD,

BY

THE EDITOR.

Hunmanby, Feb. 1, 1802.

THE FIRST BOOK OF THE
LORD PIERCE'S PENITENTIAL

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Preface.

" IN the former of these Tracts the argument is so short and clear, that the meanest capacity may understand it, and so forcible that no man has yet been found able to resist it. When it was first published, some attempts were made ; but they soon came to nothing. It is briefly this. The Christian Religion consists of facts and of doctrines, each depending on the other ; so that if the facts are true, the doctrines also must be true. Thus for example, the Resurrection of JESUS CHRIST is a fact ; our resurrection is a doctrine : admit the fact, and the doctrine cannot be denied. The ascension of Jesus Christ is another fact ; his return to judge the world is a doctrine : if the fact is true, the doctrine must be so likewise. For (argues an Apostle) if the doctrine is not true, the fact must be false : if the dead rise not, then is not CHRIST raised.

The truth of a matter of fact may be certainly known, if it be attended with certain Marks, such as no false fact can possibly have. These Marks are Four :

It is required,

(I.) That the fact be such, as men's outward senses can judge of ;

(II.) That it be performed publicly in the presence of witnesses ;

(III.) That there be public monuments and actions, kept up in memory of it ; and,

(IV.) That such monuments and actions be established and commence at the time of the fact.

And it is Mr. LESLIE's design to show, that all these Four Marks meet in the facts of Christianity."

The above is an abridged extract from the Rev. Mr. JONES's Preface to a late edition of the first Tract ; and, if I do not proceed to insert what he calls its history (in which he relates, that it was composed at the request of " the Duke of Leeds of that time," who was converted by it) is because LESLIE himself, in the introduction to a short work which he published in its defence, has given us a different account. He there expressly states, that, " it was written for the satisfaction of a gentlewoman (though it is addressed as to a man) who had been staggered with the ar-

guments of Deism, even to distraction ;" and " was purposely freed from all intricacies, and suited to her capacity ;" and " by the blessing of God, had the desired effect."

What Mr. JONES however has recorded, upon the authority of the late Dr. BERKLEY (the son of the celebrated Bishop of CLOYNE) on the subject of Dr. MIDDLETON's persevering and unsuccessful hostility to this publication ought not wholly to be omitted :

" Feeling how necessary it was to his principles, that he should some way rid himself of Mr. LESLIE's argument, he looked out for some false facts, to which the Four Marks might be applied ; and this he did for twenty years together, without being able to find one."

With regard to the history of its Author, a brief narrative may suffice. He was the son of a Bishop of Clougher, of a good Scotch family ; and, as Chancellor of the Diocese of Connor, rendered himself highly obnoxious to the Irish papists by his ardent and able disputations. Want of sympathy in religion, however, did not alienate his allegiance from his infatuated Sovereign (JAMES II.) upon his abdication : and he accordingly lost all his preferments at the Revolution. This may account for the whimsical toryism of his sweeping assertion, that " Whoever is capable of entertaining heartily the notion of all power being in the people, and making them the original of government, falls most commonly (not to say, necessarily) into the other of Deism ; so that they are almost convertible terms !"

He afterwards joined the Pretender in France, and accompanied him into Italy, with a view of converting him to Protestantism ! But finding his endeavours ineffectual, and his treatment less cordial than he had a right to expect, he returned to Ireland, where he died in 1722. Two folio volumes were the result of his controversial labours.

His chain of inferences, from the great proof here adduced of the Scripture-Miracles, he gives summarily in the above-mentioned Vindication. " The Christian Faith is, to believe in CHRIST, as having made satisfaction for our sins by his perfect obedience and sacrifice of himself upon the cross. And how shall a Deist have this faith, but by being convinced that CHRIST is this Saviour of the world ?

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And how shall he be so convinced, but by his works tes-
tifying that he was sent of God for this end? And how
shall he be satisfied of the truth of these works, but by
such human testimony as is necessary to evince the truth of
all other facts?"

Upon the subject of his second Tract, he observes (in
his Preface to the Vindication) that, in thinking the mat-
ter over again, he found there were Four additional Marks
of Christianity, highly deserving of attention—"not that
the first Four do not sufficiently demonstrate the facts of
CHRIST, and distinguish them from any false facts that ever
were circulated in the world; but the second are such, as
no other facts how true soever, not even those of MOSES,
either have had or can have." The former set establish
the evidence of the Christian Religion, the latter exhibit
its glory; and their joint effect proves, that "the Gos-
pel, like the sun, not only dispels the darkness of error,
but obscures all other truths; which, like the inferior lu-
minaries, disappear at the approach of its more shining
light, and have no glory in this respect, by reason of the glory
that excelleth."

"To those (to adopt Mr. JONES'S awful conclusion)
who take this little volume into their hands, I have only this
short advice to give. I beseech them to remember that, if
Christianity be true, it is tremendously true. All the great
things, which this world can show, are as nothing in comparison
of it. Heaven and Hell are the issue. Its facts, yet to come,
are as certain as those that are past. For the trumpet shall
sound, and the dead shall be raised (1 Cor. xv. 52.); the
heavens shall pass away with a great noise. and the ele-
ments shall melt with fervent heat (2 Pet. iii. 10.); the
angels shall gather together the elect of CHRIST from the
four winds (Matt. xxiv. 31.); and every one of us shall
give account of himself to God. (Rom. xiv. 12.) A man
must be stupified, if he can think on these things without flee-
ing from the wrath to come: and there is no way but in the
belief of Christianity, which this book teaches."

In the alterations, which I have ventured to make in it,
I have chiefly laboured to exhibit the argument in its most

compendious form, divested of much extraneous matter, and of considerable carelessness or prolixity of expression. This I trust I have effected, so as not only to preserve, but likewise to render more obvious, both its continuity and its conclusiveness; and, if by this I have the good fortune to gain for it the attention of those, whom a larger pamphlet might have deterred from the perusal, my principal object will be attained.

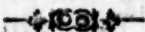
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A SHORT AND EASY METHOD

WITH THE DEISTS.



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P. W.

YOU are desirous (you inform me) to receive from me some one topic of reason, which shall demonstrate the truth of the Christian Religion, and at the same time distinguish it from the impostures of MAHOMET, and the Heathen Deities : that our Deists may be brought to this test, and be obliged either to renounce their reason and the common reason of mankind, or to admit the clear proof from reason of the Revelation of CHRIST ; which must be such a proof as no imposture can pretend to, otherwise it will not prove Christianity not to be an imposture " And " you cannot but imagine (you add) that there must be such a proof, because every truth is in itself one : and therefore one reason for it, if it be a true reason, must be sufficient ; and, if sufficient, better than many : because multiplicity creates confusion, especially in weak judgments."

Sir, you have imposed an hard task upon me ; I wish I could perform it. For, though every truth be one, yet our sight is so feeble that we cannot always come to it directly, but by many inferences and layings of things together. But I think that, in the case before us, there is such a proof as you desire, and I will set it down as shortly and plainly as I can.

I suppose then, that the truth of the Christian Doctrines will be sufficiently evinced, if the matters of fact recorded of CHRIST in the gospels are proved to be true ; for his miracles, if true, establish the truth of what he delivered. The same may be said, with regard to MOSES. If he led the children of Israel through the Red-Sea, and did such other wonderful things as are recorded of him in the book of Exodus, it must necessarily follow that he was sent by God : these being the strongest evidences we can require, and which every Deist will confess he would admit, if he himself had witnessed their performance. So that the stress of this cause will depend upon the proof of these matters of fact.

With a view, therefore, to this proof I shall proceed
1. To lay down such Marks, as to the truth of matter of fact in general; that where they all meet such matters of fact cannot be false; and,

2. To show that they all do meet in the matters of fact of MOSES, and of CHRIST; and do not meet in those reported of MAHOMET and of the Heathen Deities, nor can possibly meet in any imposture whatsoever.

I. The Marks are these:

(I.) That the fact be such, as men's outward senses can judge of;

(II.) That it be performed publicly, in the presence of witnesses;

(III.) That they be public monuments and actions kept up in memory of it; and,

(IV.) That such monuments and actions be established and commence at the time of the fact.

The two first of these Marks make it impossible for any false fact to be imposed upon men at the time, when it was said to be done, because every man's senses would contradict it. For example. Suppose I should pretend that yesterday I divided the *Thames*, in the presence of all the people of *London*, and led the whole city over to *Southwark* on dry land, the waters standing like walls on each side:—it would be morally impossible for me to convince the people of *London*, that this was true; when every man, woman, and child could contradict me, and affirm that they had not seen the *Thames* so divided, nor been led over to *Southwark* on dry land. I take it then for granted (and, I apprehend, with the allowance of all the Deists in the world) that no such imposition could be put upon mankind at the time, when such matter of fact was said to be done.

But the fact might be invented, when the men of that generation, in which it was said to be done, were all past and gone; and the credulity of after-ages might be induced to believe, that things had been performed in earlier times, which had not.

From this first two latter Marks secure us, as much as the two first in the former case. For whenever such

shall proceed to prove that it was invented, if it were stated that not only public
 truth of matters of fact remained, but likewise that public actions
 such matters of fact had been kept up in memory of it ever
 since; the deceit must be detected by no such monuments
 appearing; and by the experience of every man, woman
 and child, who must know that no such actions or observ-
 ances had ever taken place. For example; Suppose I
 should now fabricate a story of something done a thousand
 years ago; I might perhaps get a few persons to believe
 it; but if I were further to add, that from that day to
 this every man at the age of twelve years had a joint of
 his little finger cut off in memory of it, and that (of course)
 every man then living actually wanted a joint of that fing-
 er, and vouched this institution in confirmation of its
 truth:—it would be morally impossible for me to gain
 credit in such a case, because every man then living could
 contradict me, as to the circumstance of cutting off a joint
 of the finger; and that, being an essential part of my ori-
 ginal matter of fact, must prove the whole to be false.
 2. Let us now come to the second point, and show
 that all these Marks do meet in the matters of fact of Mo-
 ses, and of Christ; and do not meet in those reported of
 Mahomet and of the Heathen Deities, nor can possibly
 meet in any imposture whatsoever.
 As to Moses, he (I take it for granted) could not have
 persuaded six hundred thousand men, that he had brought
 them out of Egypt by the Red-Sea, fed them forty years
 with miraculous manna, &c. if it had not been true: be-
 cause the senses of every man, who was then alive, would
 have contradicted him. So that here are the two first
 Marks.
 For the same reason it would have been equally impos-
 sible for him to have made them receive his Five Books as
 true, which related all these things as done before their
 eyes, if they had not been so done. Observe, how posi-
 tively he speaks to them (*Deut. xi. 2.—8.*) “And know
 on this day, for I speak not with your children, which
 have not known and which have not seen the chastisement
 of the Lord your God, his greatness, his mighty hand,
 and his stretched-out arm, and his miracles, . . . but your
 eyes have seen all the great acts of the Lord, which he

did," &c. Hence we must admit it to be impossible, that these Books (if written by Moses in support of an imposture) could have been put upon the people who were alive at the time, when such things were said to be done.

'But they might have been written in some age after Moses, and published as his!'

'To this I reply, that, if it were so, it was impossible they should have been received as such; because they speak of themselves as delivered by Moses, and kept in the ark from his time (*Deut. xxxi. 24—26.*) and state that a copy of them was likewise deposited in the hands of the king, "that he might learn to fear the Lord his God, to keep all the words of this law and these statutes to do them?" (*Deut. xvii. 19.*) Here these Books expressly represent themselves as being not only the civil history, but also the established municipal law of the Jews, binding the king as well as the people. In whatever age therefore after Moses they might have been forged, it was impossible they should have gained any credit; because they could not then have been found either in the ark, or with the king, or any where else: and, when they were first published, every body must know that they had never heard of them before.

And they could still less receive them as their book of statutes, and the standing law of the land, by which they had all along been governed. Could any man at this day invent a set of Acts of Parliament for England, and make it pass upon the nation, as the only book of statutes which they had ever known? As impossible was it for these Books, if written in any age after Moses, to have been received for what they declare themselves to be, viz. the municipal law of the Jews; and for any man to have persuaded that people, that they had owned them as their code of statutes from the time of Moses, that is, before they had ever heard of them! Nay more—they must instantly have forgotten their former laws, if they could receive these Books as such; and as such only could they receive them, because such they vouched themselves to be. Let me ask the Deists but one short question: "Was a book of sham-laws ever palmed upon any nation, since the world began?" If not, with what face can they say this

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of the law-books of the Jews? Why will they affirm that of them, which they admit never to have happened in any other instance?

But they must be still more unreasonable. For the Books of Moses have an ampler demonstration of their truth, than even other law-books have; as they not only contain the laws themselves, but give an historical account of their institution and regular fulfilment: of the Passover, for instance, in memory of their supernatural protection, upon the slaying of the first-born of Egypt; the Dedication of the first-born of Israel, both of man and beast; the preservation of Aaron's Rod which budded, of the pot of Manna, and of the brazen Serpent, which remained till the days of Hezekiah (2 Kings, xviii. 4.) &c. And, beside these memorials of particular occurrences, there were other solemn observances, in general memory of their deliverance out of Egypt, &c.; as their annual Expiations, their New-Moons, their Sabbaths, and their ordinary Sacrifices: so that there were yearly, monthly, weekly, and daily recognitions of these things. The same Books likewise further inform us, that the tribe of Levi was appointed and consecrated by God as his Ministers, by whom alone these institutions were to be celebrated; that it was death for any others to approach the altar; that their High-Priest wore a brilliant mitre and magnificent robes, with the miraculous *Urim* and *Thummim* in his breast-plate; that at his word all the people were to go out, and to come in; that these Levites were also their judges, even in all civil causes, &c.

Hence too therefore, in whatever age after Moses they might have been forged, it was impossible they should have gained any credit: unless indeed the fabricators could have made the whole nation believe, *in spite of their incurable experience to the contrary*, that they had received these Books long before from their fathers; had been taught them when they were children, and had taught them their own children; that they had been circumcised themselves, had circumcised their families, and uniformly observed their whole minute detail of sacrifices and ceremonies; that they had never eaten any swine's flesh, or other prohibited meats; that they had a splendid tabernacle, with a regular

priesthood to administer in it (confined to one particular tribe) and a superintendant High-Priest, whose death alone could deliver those that were fled to the cities of refuge; that these priests were their ordinary judges, even in civil matters, &c.—But this would surely have been impossible, if none of these things had been practised; and it would consequently have been impossible to circulate as true, a set of Books which affirmed that they had practised them, and upon that practice rested their own pretensions to acceptance. So that here are the two latter Marks.

‘But (to advance to the utmost degree of supposition) these things might have been practised, prior to this alleged forgery; and those Books only deceived the nation, by making them believe that they were practised in memory of such and such occurrences, as were then invented!’

In this hypothesis (however groundless) the same impossibilities press upon our notice, as before. For it implies, that the Jews had previously kept these observances in memory of nothing, or without knowing why they kept them; whereas, in all their particulars, they strikingly express their original: as the Passover, instituted in memory of God’s passing over the children of the Israelites, when he slew the first-born of Egypt, &c.

Let us admit however, contrary both to probability and to matter of fact, that they did not know why they kept these observances; yet was it possible to persuade them, that they were kept in memory of something, which they had never heard of before? For example. Suppose I should now forge some romantic story of strange things done a long while ago; and, in confirmation of this, should endeavor to convince the Christian world, that they had regularly from that period to this kept holy the first day of the week in memory of such or such a man, a Cæsar or a Mahomet; and had all been baptized in his name, and sworn by it upon the very book which I had then fabricated, and which of course they had never seen before, in their public courts of judicature; that this book likewise contained their law, civil and ecclesiastical, which they had ever since his time acknowledged, and no other;—I ask any Deist, whether he thinks it possible that such a cheat

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one particular could be received as the gospel of Christians, or not? The same reason holds with regard to the books of Moses; and must hold with regard to every book, which contains matters of fact accompanied by the above-mentioned four marks. For these marks conjunctively secure mankind from imposition, with regard to any false fact, as well in after-ages, as at the time when it was said to be done.

Let me produce, as an additional and familiar illustration, the *Stonehenge of Salisbury-plain*. Almost every body has seen, or heard of it; and yet nobody knows by whom, or in memory of what, it was set up.

Now suppose I should write a book to-morrow, and state in it that these huge stones were erected by a Cæsar or a Mahomet, in memory of such and such of their actions: and should further add, that this book was written at the time when those actions were performed, and by the doers themselves or by eye-witnesses; and had been constantly received as true, and quoted by authors of the greatest credit in regular succession ever since: that it was well known in England, and even enjoined by Act of Parliament to be taught our children; and that we accordingly did teach it our children, and had been taught it ourselves when we were children;—would this, I demand of any Deist, pass current in England? or rather should not I, or any other person who might insist upon its reception, instead of being believed be sent to Bedlam?

Let us compare then this rude structure with the *Stonehenge*, as I may call it, or “twelve stones” set up at *Gilgal*. (Josh. iv. 6.) It is there said, that the reason why they were set up was that, when the children of the Jews in after-ages should ask their meaning, it should be told them. (iv. 20—22.) And the thing in memory of which they were set up (the passage over Jordan) was such, as could not possibly have been imposed upon that people at the time, when it was said to be done; it was not less miraculous, and from the previous notice, preparations, and other striking circumstances of its performance (iii. 5. 15.) still more unassailable by the petty cavils of infidel sophistry, than their passage through the Red-Sea.

Now, to form our argument, let us suppose that there never was any such thing as that passage over Jordan;

that these stones at *Gilgal* had been set up on some unknown occasion ; and that some designing man in an after-age invented this book of Joshua, affirmed that it was written at the time of that imaginary event by Joshua himself, and adduced this Stonage as a testimony of its truth :—would not every body say to him, “ We know the Stonage very well, but we never before heard of this reason for it, nor of this book of Joshua ; where has it lain concealed all this while ? And where and how came you, after so long a period, to find it ? Besides, it informs us that this passage over Jordan was solemnly directed to be taught our children, from age to age ; and, to that end, that they were always to be instructed in the meaning of this particular monument ; but we were never taught it ourselves, when we were children, nor did we ever teach it our children. And it is in the highest degree improbable, that such an emphatic ordinance should have been forgotten, during the continuance of so remarkable a pile of stones, set up expressly for the purpose of preserving its remembrance.”

If then, for these reasons, no such fabrication could be put upon us, as to the Stonage in *Salisbury-Plain* ; how much less could it succeed, as to the Stonage at *Gilgal* ? If, where we are ignorant of the true origin of a mere naked monument, such a sham origin cannot be imposed, how much less practicable would it be to impose upon us in actions and observances, which we celebrate in memory of what we actually know ; to make us forget, what we have regularly commemorated ; and to persuade us, that we have constantly kept such and such institutions with reference to something, which we never heard of before ; that is, that we knew something, before we knew it ! And, if we find it thus impossible to practise deceit, even in cases which have not the above Four Marks, how much more impossible must it be, that any deceit should be practised in cases, in which all these Four Marks meet !

In the matters of fact of Christ likewise, as well as in those of Moses, these Four Marks are to be found. The reasoning indeed, which has been already advanced with respect to the old testament, is generally applicable to the new. The miracles of Christ, like those of Moses, were

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such as men's outward senses could judge of; and were performed publicly, in the presence of those to whom the history of them, contained in the Gospel, was addressed. And it is related, that "about three thousand" at one time (Acts ii. 41.) and "about five thousand" at another, (iv. 4.) were converted in consequence of what they themselves saw achieved in matters, where it was impossible that they should have been deceived. Here therefore were the two first Marks.

And, with regard to the two latter, Baptism and the Lord's Supper were instituted as memorials of certain things, not in after-ages, but *at the time* when these things were said to be done; and have been strictly observed, *from that time to this*, without interruption. Christ himself also ordained Apostles, &c. to preach and administer his Sacraments, and to govern his church "even unto the end of the world." Now the Christian clergy are as notorious a matter of fact amongst us, as the tribe of Levi were amongst the Jews; and as the *era* and object of their appointment are part of the gospel-narrative, if that narrative had been a fiction of some subsequent age, at the time of its fabrication no such order of men, deriving themselves from such an origin, could have been found; which would have effectually given the lie to the whole story. And the truth of the matters of fact of Christ being no otherwise asserted, than as there were at that time (whenever the Deists will suppose the gospel to have been fabricated) not only public Sacraments, but likewise a public clergy of his institution to administer them, and it being impossible upon this hypothesis that there could be any such things then in existence, we must admit it to be equally impossible that the forgery should have been successful.—Hence it was as impossible to have deceived mankind, in respect to these matters of fact, by inventing them in after-ages, as at the time when they were said to be done.

The matters of fact, reported of Mahomet and of the Heathen Deities, do all want some of these Four Marks, by which the certainty of facts is established. Mahomet himself, as he tells us in his Koran (vi. &c.) pretended to no miracles; and those, which are commonly related of

him, pass even amongst his followers for ridiculous legends, and as such are rejected by their Scholars and Philosophers. They have not either of the two first Marks ; for his converse with the moon, his night-journey from Mecca to Jerusalem, and thence to Heaven, &c. were not performed before any witnesses, nor was the tour indeed of a nature to admit human attestation : and to the two latter they do not even affect to advance any claim.

The same may be affirmed, with little variation, of the stories of the Heathen Deities ; of Mercury's stealing sheep, Jupiter's transforming himself into a bull, &c. beside the absurdity of such degrading and profligate adventures. And accordingly we find, that the more enlightened Pagans themselves considered them as fables involving a mystical meaning, of which several of their writers have endeavored to give us the explication. It is true, these gods had their priests, their feasts, their games, and other public ceremonies : but all these want the fourth Mark, of commencing *at the time* when the things, which they commemorate, were said to have been done. Hence they cannot secure mankind in subsequent ages from imposture, as they furnish no internal means of detection at the period of the forgery. The *Bacchanalia*, for example, and other heathen festivals, were established long after the events to which they refer ; and the priests of Juno, Mars, &c. were not ordained by those imaginary Deities, but appointed by others in some after-age to their honor, and are therefore no evidence of the truth of their preternatural achievements.

To apply what has been said.

We may challenge all the Deists in the world to show any fabulous action, accompanied by these Four Marks. The thing is impossible. The histories of the Old and New Testament never could have been received, if they had not been true ; because the priesthoods of Levi and Christ, the observance of the Sabbath, the Passover and Circumcision, and the Sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, &c. are there represented as descending uninterruptedly from the times of their respective institution. And it would have been as impossible to persuade men in after-ages, that they had been circumcised or bap-

tized, had celebrated Passover, or had any administration of the sacraments, without any seas on dry land, or such a person as the Gospel relates, the matter being more than as usual, of the sense.

I do not think the Marks, is must be true.

I can hardly believe that Julius Cæsar was led in the streets, his assassins, and of Chæton, any other consider a to deny the ly men of histories of fallible men.

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ulous legends, had circumcised or baptized their children, and celebrated Passovers, Sabbaths, and Sacraments under the ministrations of a certain order of priests, if they had done none of those things ; as to make them believe at the time, without any real foundation, that they had gone through seas on dry land, seen the dead raised, &c. But, without such a persuasion, it was impossible that either the Law or the Gospel could have been received. And the truth of the matters of fact of each being no otherwise asserted, than as such public ceremonies had been previously practised, their certainty is established upon the *full conviction of the senses of mankind.*

I do not say that every thing, which wants these Four Marks, is false ; but that every thing, which has them all, must be true.

I can have no doubt that there was such a man as Julius Cæsar, that he conquered at Pharsalia, and was killed in the Senate-house ; though neither his actions, nor his assassination, be commemorated by any public observances. But this shows, that the matters of fact of Moses, and of Christ, have come down to us better certified than any other whatsoever. And yet our Deists, who would consider any one as hopelessly irrational that should offer to deny the existence of Cæsar, value themselves as the only men of profound sense and judgment, for ridiculing the histories of Moses and of Christ, though guarded with infallible marks which that of Cæsar wants.

Besides, the nature of the subject would of itself lead to a more minute examination of the one, than of the other : for of what consequence is it to me, or to the world, whether there ever were such a man as Cæsar ; whether he conquered at Pharsalia, and was killed in the Senate-house, or not ? But our eternal welfare is concerned in the truth of what is recorded in the Scriptures ; and therefore they would naturally be more narrowly scrutinized, when proposed for acceptance.

How unreasonable then is it to reject matters of fact so important, so sifted, and so attested ; and yet to think it absurd, even to madness, to deny other matters of fact, which have not the thousandth part of their evidence, have had comparatively little investigation, and are of no consequence at all !

THE TRUTH OF CHRISTIANITY DEMONSTRATED.



TO the preceding Four Marks, which are common to the matters of fact of Moses and of Christ, I now proceed to subjoin Four additional Marks ; the three last of which no matter of fact, how true soever, either has had or can have, except that of Christ.

This will obviously appear, if it be considered,

[V.] That the Book, which relates the facts, contains likewise the laws of the people to whom it belongs ;

[VI.] That Christ was previously announced, for that very period, by a long train of prophecies ; and,

[VII.] Still more peculiarly prefigured by types, both of a circumstantial and personal nature, from the earliest ages ; and, lastly,

[VIII.] That the facts of Christianity are such, as to make it impossible for either their relators or hearers to believe them, if false, without supposing an universal deception of the senses of mankind.

The fifth Mark (which has been subordinately discussed in the former Tract in such a manner, as to supercede the necessity of dwelling upon it in this) renders it impossible for any one to have imposed such a book upon any people. For example. Suppose I should forge a code of laws for Great-Britain, and publish it next term : could I hope to persuade the judges, lawyers, and people that this was their genuine statute-book, by which all their causes had been determined in the public courts for so many centuries past ? Before they could be brought to this, they must totally forget their established laws, which they had so laboriously committed to memory and so familiarly quoted in every day's practice ; and believe that this new book, which they had never seen before, was that old book which had been pleaded so long in *Westminster-Hall*, which has been so often printed, and of which the originals are now so carefully preserved in the Tower.

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This applies strongly to the books of Moses, in which not only the history of the Jews, but likewise their whole civil, secular and ecclesiastical, was contained. And though from the early extension and destined universality of the Christian system, it could not without unnecessary confusion furnish an uniform civil code to all its various followers, who were already under the Government of laws in some degree adapted to their respective climates and characters, yet was it intended as the spiritual guide of the new Church. And in this respect the fifth Mark is still stronger with regard to the Gospel, than even to the Books of Moses; inasmuch as it is easier (however hard) to imagine the substitution of an entire statute-book in one particular nation, than that all the nations of Christendom should have unanimously conspired in the forgery. But without such a conspiracy such a forgery could never have succeeded, as the Gospel universally formed a regular part of their daily public offices; and as such was received by them.

But I hasten to the sixth Mark, of Prophecy. The great fact of Christ's coming was previously announced to the Jews in the Old Testament, "by all the holy Prophets, which have been since the world began." (Luke i. 70.)

The first promise upon the subject was made to Adam, immediately after the Fall. (*Gen. iii. 15.* Compare *Col. ii. 15.* and *Heb. ii. 14.*)

He was again repeatedly promised to Abraham, (*Gen. xii. 3. xviii. 18. xxii. 18.* applied *Gal. iii. 16.*) to Isaac (*Gen. xxvi. 4.*) and to Jacob. (*Gen. xxviii. 14.*)

Jacob expressly prophesied of him, under the appellation of "Shiloh," or *him that was to be sent.* (*Gen. xlix. 10.*) Balaam also, with the voice of inspiration, pronounced him "the Star of Jacob, and the Sceptre of Israel." (*Numb. xxiv. 17.*) Moses spake of him, as One "greater than himself." (*Deut. xviii. 15, 18, 19*; applied *Acts iii. 22.*) And Daniel hailed his arrival, under the name of "Messiah the Prince." (*ix. 25.*)

It was foretold, that he should be born of a virgin (*Isai. vii. 14.*) in the city of Bethlehem (*Mic. v. 2.*) of the seed of Jesse (*Isai. xi. 1, 10.*):—that he should lead a life of poverty and suffering (*Psal. xxii.*) inflicted upon him, not

"for himself" (Dan. ix. 26.) but for the sins of others (Isai. liii.); and, after a short confinement in the grave should rise again (Psal. xvi. 10. applied Acts ii. 27, 31 and xiii. 35—37.):—that he should "sit upon the throne of David for ever, and be called "the mighty God" (Isai. ix. 6. 7.), "the Lord our Righteousness" (Jer. xxxiii. 16.), "Immanuel, that is, God with us" (Isai. vii. 14. applied Matt. 1. 23.), and by David himself, whose son he was according to the flesh, Lord (Psal. cx. 1. applied to Christ by himself Matt. xxi. 44. and by Peter Acts ii. 34.)

The time of his incarnation was to be, before "the Sceptre should depart from Judah" Gen. xlix. 10.) during the continuance of the second Temple (Hagg. ii. 7. 9.), and within seventy weeks or 490 days, i. e. according to the constant interpretation of prophecy, 490 years from its erection. [Dan. ix. 24.]

From these and many other predictions, the coming of Christ was at all times the general expectation of the Jews; and that it had ripened into full maturity, at the time of his actual advent, may be inferred from the number of false Messiahs, who about that period made their appearance.

That he was likewise the expectation of the Gentiles [in conformity to the prophecies of Gen. xxix. 10. and Hagg. ii. 7. where the terms "People;" and "Nations," denote the Heathen world] is evinced by the coming of the wise men from the East, &c.; a story, which would of course have been contradicted by some of the individuals so disgracefully concerned in it, if the fact of their arrival, and the consequent massacre of the infants [1] in and about Bethlehem, had not been fresh in every one's memory: by them, for instance, who afterwards suborned false witnesses against Christ, and gave large money to the soldiers to conceal [if possible] the fact of his resurrection; or them,

(1) This is alluded to by Macrobius who relates Augustus, Greek pun upon the occasion in a language, in which it entirely loses its point: *Cum oculisisset inter pueros quos in Syria Herodes rex Judæorum intra bimatum jussit interfici, filium quoque ejus occisum; ait. "Melius est Herodis porcum esse, quam filium"* (Saturn II. 4.) i. e. *Græce, uti non and, Anglice: "It is better to be Herod's swine than his son;"* on account of the abstinence of the Jews from that animal.

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who in still later days every where zealously "spoke against" the tenets and practices of his rising Church.

All over the East indeed there was a general tradition, that about that time a king of the Jews would be born, who should govern the whole earth. This prevailed so strongly at Rome, a few months before the birth of Augustus, that the Senate made a decree to expose all the children produced that year; but the execution of it was eluded by a trick of some of the senators, who from the pregnancy of their wives were led to hope that they might be the fathers of the promised Prince. [2] Its currency is also recorded, with a remarkable identity of phrase, by the pens of Suetonius [3] and Tacitus. [4] Now that in this there was no collusion between the Chaldeans, Romans, and Jews, is sufficiently proved by the desperate methods suggested or carried into effect, for its discomfiture. Nor in fact is it practicable for whole nations of contemporary [and still less, if possible, for those of successive] generation, to concert a story perfectly harmonious in all its minute accompaniments of time, place, manner, and other circumstances.

In addition to the above general predictions of the coming, life, death, and resurrection of Christ, there are others which foretell still more strikingly several particular incidents of the Gospel-narrative; incidents unparralleled in the whole range of history, and which could have been foreseen by God alone. They were certainly not foreseen by the human agents, concerned in their execution; or they would never have contributed to the fulfilment of prophecies referred even by themselves to the Messiah, and therefore verifying the divine mission of him, whom they crucified as an imposter.

Observe, then, how literally many of these predictions

(2)—*regem populo Romano Naturum parturiere: senatum exterritum censuisse, Ne quis illo anno genitus educaretur; eos qui gravidas uxores haberent quo ad se quisque spem traberet, curasse ne senatusconsultum ad aerarium deferretur.* (Suet. Aug. 94.)

(3) *Percrebuerat Oriente tota vetus et constans opinio esse in satis, ut eo tempore Iudaei profecti rerum potirentur.* (Suet. Vesp. 4.)

(4) *Plurimus persuasio inerat antiquis sacerdotum libris contineri, eo in tempore fore ut valesceret Oriens, profectique Judaei rerum potirentur.* (Tac. Hist. v. 13.)

were fulfilled. For example. Read Psal. lxxix. 2. "They gave me gall to eat, and vinegar to drink;" and compare Matt. xxvii. 34. *They gave him vinegar to drink mingled with gall.*—Again, it is said, Psal. xxii. 16—18. "They pierced my hands and my feet—they stand staring and looking upon me. They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture;" [5] as if it had been written after John xix. 23, 24. It is said likewise, Zech. xi. 10. "They shall look upon me, whom they have pierced;" and we are told, John xix. 34. *that one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, &c.*

Compare also Psal. xxii. 7, 8. "All they, that saw me, laugh me to scorn: they shoot out their lips and shake their heads, saying, He trusted in God, that he would deliver him; let him deliver him, if he will have him—whereas Matt. xxvii. 39, 41, 43. *And they that passed by reviled him, wagging their heads and saying, Come down from the cross. Likewise also the chief-priests mocking him, with scribes and elders, said, He trusted in God: let him deliver him now, if he will have him; for he said, I am the Son*

(5) The soldiers did not tear his coat, because it was without seam woven from the top throughout; and therefore they cast lots for it. But this was entirely accidental: with the passage in the Psalms, as Romans, they were not very likely to be acquainted. The same remark applies to the next instance, from Zechariah.

And here it may be suggested (in reply to those, who insidiously magnify "the power of chance, the ingenuity of accommodation, and the industry of research," as chiefly supporting the credit of obscure prophecy) that greater plainness would enable wicked men, as false agents, to prevent its accomplishment, when obviously directed against themselves. The Jews, not understanding what Christ meant by his "lifting-up" (John viii. 28. xii. 32, 33.) and not knowing that he had foretold his crucifixion to his apostles (Matt. xx. 19.) instead of finally stoning him—the death appointed by their law (Levit. xxiv. 16. for blasphemy. (Matt. xxvi. 65.) more than once menaced against the Saviour (John viii. 59. x. 33.) and actually inflicted upon Stephen (Acts vii. 58.) for that offence—unconsciously delivered him to the predicted Roman cross. Again. The piercing of his side was no part of the Roman sentence, but merely to ascertain his being dead, previously to taking him down from the cross; "that the body might not remain there on the Sabbath-day," which commenced that evening, a few hours after the crucifixion. From his early giving up the ghost, however it was not necessary that a bone of him should be broken (Exod. xii. 46. Numb. ix. 12. Psal. xxxiv. 20.) like those of the thieves, his fellow-sufferers. (John xix. 32, 36.)

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God. His very price and the mode of laying out the money, previously specified Zech. xi. 13. are historically stated, in perfect correspondence with the prophet, Matt. xxvii. 6, 7. And his riding into Jerusalem upon an ass, predicted Zech. ix. 9. [and referred by one of the most learned of the Jewish Rabbies, to the Messiah] is recorded by the same inspired historian, xxi. 9. Lastly, it was foretold that "he should make his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death" [Isai. liii. 9.]; and this, rightly translated, [6] was precisely verified by the very improbable incidents of his being crucified *between two thieves* [Matt. xxvii. 38.] and afterwards *laid in the new tomb of the rich man of Arimathea*. [ib. 57, 60.]

Thus do the prophecies of the Old Testament, without variation or ambiguity, refer to the person and character of Christ. His own predictions, in the New, demand a few brief observations.

Those relating to the destruction of Jerusalem, which specified that it should be "laid even with the ground," and "not one stone left upon another" [Luke xix. 44.] before "that generation passed" [Matt. xxiv. 34.] were fulfilled in a most surprisingly-literal manner, the very foundations of the temple being ploughed up by Turnus Rufus. In another remarkable prophecy he announced the many false Messiahs, that should come after him, and the ruin in which their followers should be involved [Matt. xxiv. 25, 26.]; and that great numbers actually assumed that holy character before the final fall of the city, and led the people into the wilderness to their destruction, we learn from Josephus. [Antiq. Jud. xviii. 12. xx. 6. and B. J. viii. 31.] Nay such was their wretched infatuation, that under this delusion they rejected the offers of Titus, who courted them to peace. [Id B. J. vii. 12.]

It would be sufficient barely to mention his foretelling the dispersion of that unhappy nation, and the triumph of his Gospel *over the gates of hell*, under every possible disadvantage; himself low and despised, his associates on-

(6) This passage, which in the common translation inverts the circumstances of Christ's passion, is by Dr. Lowth rendered perfectly agreeable to them: "And his grave was appointed with the wicked, but with the rich man was his tomb."

ly twelve [and those illiterate and unpolished,] and his adversaries the allied powers, prejudices, habits, interests, and appetites of mankind.

But the *seventh* Mark is still more peculiar [if possible] to Christ, than even that of Prophecy. For whatever may be weakly pretended with regard to the oracular predictions of Delphi or Dodona, the Heathens never affected to prefigure any future event by Types or resemblances of the fact, consisting of analogies either in individuals, or in sensible institutions directed to continue, till the anti-type itself should make its appearance.

These types, in the instance of Christ, were of a twofold nature, circumstantial and personal. Of the former kind [not to notice the general rite of sacrifice [7] may be produced, as examples, 1. The Passover, appointed in memory of that great night when the Destroying Angel, who "slew all the first-born of Egypt," passed over those houses, upon whose door-posts the blood of the Paschal Lamb was sprinkled; and directed to be eaten with [what the Apostle, 1 Cor. v. 7. 8. calls] "the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth." 2. The annual Expiation, in two respects: first, as the High-Priest entered into the Holy of Holies [representing Heaven, Exod. xxv. 40. Wisd. ix. 8. Heb. ix. 24.] with the blood of the sacrifice, whose body was burnt without the camp—"wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate" [Heb. xiii. 12.]; and, "after he had offered one sacrifice for sins, for ever sat down on the right hand of God" [x. 12.]: and secondly, as "all the iniquities of the children of Israel were put upon the head" of the Scape-goat. [Lev. xvi. 21.] 3. The brazen Serpent, by looking up to which the people were cured of the stings of the fiery serpents; and whose "lifting-up" was, by Christ himself, interpreted as emblematical of his being lifted up on the cross. [John. iii. 14.] 4. The Manna, which represented "the bread

[7] Amongst the heathen posterity of Noah likewise the principle, that "evil was to be averted by vicarious atonement," was traditionally preserved: witness the self-devotion of Curtius and the Decii, and the sacrifice of Iphigenia and the son of the king of Moab. [4 Kings iii. 27.]

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 bits, interests, 35.] 5. The Rock, whence the waters flowed, to supply
 drink in the wilderness; "and that rock was Christ."
 [if possible] 1 Cor. x. 4.] 6. The Sabbath, "a shadow of Christ"
 For whatever [Col. ii. 16, 11.]; and, as a figure of his eternal rest,
 oracular pre- denominated "a sign of the perpetual covenant," [Exod.
 never affect. xxxi. 16. 17. Ezek. xx. 12, 20.] And lastly, to omit
 or resemblan- others. 7. The Temple, where alone these shadowy sac-
 er in individu- rifices were to be offered, because Christ ("the body")
 continue, till the was to be offered there himself. [8]

Of personal types likewise, I shall confine myself to
 such, as are so considered in the New-Testament :

1. Adam, between whom and Christ a striking series of
 relations is marked, Rom. v. 12—end, and 1 Cor. xv.
 45.—49. 2. Noah, who "saved by water; the like
 figure whereunto, even baptism, doth now save us, by
 the resurrection of Jesus Christ." (1 Pet. iii. 20, 21.)
 3. Melchisedec, king of Salem, who was made "like un-
 to the son of God, a priest continually." (Heb. vii.
 3.) 4. Abraham, "the heir of the world" (Rom. iv. 13.)
 "in whom all the nations of the earth are blessed." (Gen.
 xviii. 18. 5. Isaac, in his birth and intended sacrifice,
 "whence [9] also his father received him in a figure"
 (Heb. xi. 19.) i. e. of the resurrection of Christ. He too
 was the promised seed [Gen. xxi. 12. and Gal. iii. 16.]
 "in whom all the nations of the earth were to be blessed."
 (Gen. xxii. 18.) 6. Jacob, in his vision of the ladder
 [Gen. xxviii. 12. and John i. 51.] and his wrestling with
 the angel; whence he, and after him the Church, obtain-

[8] Hence the sin of the Jews (so often mentioned in the Old Tes-
 tament) in that the high places, where they used to sacrifice illegally,
 were not taken away. (1 Kings xv. 14. xxii. 43. 2 Kings xii. 3. xv. 4.
 35. &c.) But they were removed by Hezekiah (2 Kings xviii. 4.) and
 the people directed to worship and burn incense at Jerusalem only.
 (2 Chron xxxii. 12. Isai. xxxvi. 7.)

Hence too by the expatriation of the Jews, and the destruction of
 "their city and sanctuary" (predicted to take place soon after the
 death of the Messiah, Dan. ix. 26, 27.) they have now "no more sac-
 rifice for sins" (Heb. x. 26.): for, when *that which was perfect was*
come, that which was in part was done away. The types ceased, when
 the anti-type appeared.

(9) Moriah likewise, the scene of the enjoined oblation, is supposed
 to have been Mount Calvary.

ed the name of Israel. (Gen. xxvii. 24. & Matt. xi. 12. The Gentile world also, like Jacob (i. e. a supplanter Gen. xxvii, 36.) gained the blessing and heirship from their elder brethren the Jews. 7. Moses (Deut. xviii. 18. and John i. 45.) in redeeming the children of Israel out of Egypt. 8. Joshua (called also Jesus, Heb. iv. 8.) in acquiring for them the possession of the Holy Land, and Lieutenant to "the Captain of the hosts of the Lord, [Josh. v. 14.] 9. David (Psal. xvi. 10. and Acts ii. 2—35.) upon whose throne Christ is said to sit (Isai. ix. 7.) and by whose name he is frequently designated. (Hos. iii. 5. &c.) in his pastoral, regal, and prophetic capacity. And, 10. Jonah, in his dark imprisonment of three days, applied by Christ to himself. (Matt. xii. 40.)

The *Eighth* and last Mark is, That the facts of Christianity are such, as to make it impossible for either the relators or the hearers to believe them, if false, without supposing an universal Deception of the senses of mankind.

For they were related by the doers, or by eye-witnesses to those who themselves likewise either were or might have been present (and undoubtedly, knew many that were present) at their performance; to this circumstance, indeed, both Christ and his apostles often appeal. And they were of such a nature, as wholly to exclude every chance of imposition. What juggler could have given sight to him, "that was born blind;" have fed five thousand hungry guests with "five loaves and two fishes;" or have raised one, who had been "four days buried," from his grave?

When then we add to this, that none of the Jewish or Roman persecutors of Christianity, to whom its first teachers frequently referred as witnesses of those facts, ever ventured to deny them: that no apostate disciple, under the fear of punishment or the hope of reward (not even the artful and accomplished Julian himself), ever pretended to detect them: that neither learning nor ingenuity in the long lapse of eighteen hundred years, have been able to show their falsehood; though, for the first three centuries after their promulgation, the civil government strongly stimulated hostile inquiry; and that their original rela-

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ors, after lives of unintermitted hardship, joyfully incur-
ed death in defence of their truth—we can scarcely ima-
ine the possibility of a more perfect or more abundant
emonstration.

It now rests with the Deists, if they would vindicate
their claim to the self-bestowed title of men of reason, to
dduce some matters of fact of former ages, which they al-
ow to be true, possessing evidence superior or even
imilar to those of Christ. This however, it must at the
ame time be observed, would be far from proving the
atters of fact of Christ to be false; but certainly, with-
out this, they cannot reasonably assert that their own facts
lone, so much more unfavorably circumstanced with re-
ard to testimony, are true.

Let them therefore produce their Cæsar, or their Ma-
omet.

(I.) Performing a fact, of which men's outward senses
can judge;

(II.) Publicly in the presence of witnesses;

(III.) In memory of which public monuments and actions
are kept up.

(IV.) Instituted and commencing at the time of the fact:

(V.) Recorded likewise in a set of books, addressed to
the identical people before whom it was performed, and
containing their whole code of civil and ecclesiastical law;

(VI.) As the work of one previously announced for
that very period by a long train of prophecies.

(VII.) And still more peculiarly pre-figured by types,
both of a circumstantial and personal nature, from the ear-
liest ages; and, lastly,

(VIII.) Of such a character, as made it impossible for
either the relators or hearers to believe it, if false, without
supposing an universal deception of the senses of mankind:

Again—Let them display in its relators, themselves too
eye-witnesses of the fact, the same proofs of veracity evin-
ced by an equally-patient endurance of certain distress and
death in its support; and in some doctrine founded upon
it [as unpopular in its outset, and in its progress as little
aided by arms, or learning, or oratory, or intrigue] the
same triumph over the united prejudices and passions of
mankind:

Finally—Let them exhibit, amongst it believers (unbiassed by any supposed professional partiality) the minutely-investigating spirit of a Boyle, the profound understanding of a Locke, the dispassionate reason of an Addison, the discriminating judgment of a Hale, the sublimed intellect of a Milton, and the only-not-divine sagacity of Newton :

OR LET THEM SUBMIT TO THE IRRESISTABLE CERTAINTY OF THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION.



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